Amendments to the Claims:

Please add new Claim 38 and amend Claims 30-33 as indicated in the listing below. Cancel Claims 4-7, 25-27 and 35-37 without prejudice to renewal as drawn to non-elected inventions. The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (previously presented) A method for treating diabetes mellitus in an individual in need thereof, said method comprising:

administering to said individual a composition providing a gastrin/CCK receptor ligand and an EGF receptor ligand in an amount sufficient to effect differentiation of pancreatic islet precursor cells to mature insulin-secreting cells.

2. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said EGF receptor ligand is an EGF receptor ligand is selected from the group consisting of EGF1-53, EGF1-48, or its EGF1-47 congener of EGF1-48, and an EGF1-49 congener of EGF1-48.

3. (original) The method according to Claim 2, wherein said EGF1-53, EGF1-48, or its EGF1-47 or EGF1-49 congener is human EGF1-53, EGF1-48, or its EGF1-47 or EGF1-49 or its congener.

4-18. (cancelled)

19. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said gastrin/CCK receptor ligand is a gastrin.

20. (previously presented) Pancreatic islet precursor cells treated *ex vivo* with a sufficient amount of a gastrin/CCK receptor ligand and an EGF receptor ligand to induce proliferation of said pancreatic islet precursor cells into mature insulin-secreting β-cells, whereby an expanded population of said mature insulin-secreting β-cells is obtained.

21. (previously presented) A method for obtaining an expanded population of insulin-secreting pancreatic β-cells, said method comprising:

providing pancreatic islet precursor cells with a sufficient amount of a gastrin/CCK receptor ligand and an EGF receptor ligand to induce proliferation of said insulin secreting pancreatic β-cells, whereby said insulin-secreting population of pancreatic β-cells is obtained.

22. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 21, wherein said providing is *ex vivo.*

23. (previously presented) A method for treating diabetes mellitus in an individual in need thereof, said method comprising:

administering to said individual:

a composition providing a gastrin/CCK receptor ligand selected from the group consisting of gastrin and cholecystokinin; and

an EGF receptor ligand selected from the group consisting of EGF1-53, EGF1-48, or its EGF1-47 congener of EGF1-48, and an EGF1-49 congener of EGF1-48;

in an amount sufficient to effect differentiation of pancreatic islet precursor cells to mature insulin-secreting cells.

24. (previously presented) A method for obtaining an expanded population of insulin-secreting pancreatic β-cells *ex vivo*, said method comprising:

providing pancreatic islet precursor cells with a sufficient amount of;

a composition providing a gastrin/CCK receptor ligand selected from the group consisting of gastrin and cholecystokinin; and

an EGF receptor ligand selected from the group consisting of TGF-α, EGF1-53, EGF1-48, or its EGF1-47 congener of EGF1-48, and an EGF1-49 congener of EGF1-48;

whereby said insulin-secreting population of pancreatic β-cells is obtained.

25-27. (cancelled)

28. (previously presented) The method according to Claims 21 or 24, wherein said precursor cells are obtained from a donor.

29. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 28, wherein said donor is a cadaver.

30. (currently amended) A kit comprising as a first component a gastrin/CCK receptor ligand and as a second component an EGF receptor ligand.

31. (currently amended) The kit according to Claim 30 or Claim 38, wherein ~~the gastrin/CCK receptor ligand and the EGF receptor ligand~~ said components are included in a single container.

32. (currently amended) The kit according to Claim 30 or Claim 38, wherein ~~the gastrin/CCK receptor ligand and the EGF receptor ligand~~ said components are present as single dosages in said kit.

33. (currently amended) The kit according to any one of Claims 30-32 and 38, wherein said ~~gastrin/CCK receptor ligand and an EGF receptor ligand~~ components are concentrates.

34. (currently amended) A kit for use in the treatment of diabetes, comprising:

pancreatic islet precursor cells obtained according to the method of Claims 21, 24, ~~26~~ or 28.

35-37. (cancelled)

38. (new) The composition according to Claim 30, further comprising as a third component a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above response, it is submitted that this application is now ready to proceed. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (831) 648-3090.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: April 23, 2004

Barbara Rae-Venter, Ph.D.
Reg. No. 32,750

Rae-Venter Law Group, P.C.
PO Box 1898
Monterey, CA 93942-1898
Phone: (831) 648-3090
Facsimile: (831) 242-0137

BRV/mnb